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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
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FARM PHONE BILLS UP SLIGHTLY

Payments by farmers for local telephone service continued to increase during the latter part of 1953 and the first half of 1954, according to a survey made by the Crop Reporting Board. In July 1954, they averaged \$3.33 a month or 3 percent above a year earlier. This was the smallest annual increase in local monthly rates both percentage wise and in actual amount since 1947. Total monthly charges for both local and long distance services averaged \$4.92 per farm with telephones compared with \$4.95 for July 1953. For the most part, the increase in local bills was accompanied by an increase in quality of service as more phones transferred from crank to lift or from lift to dial type service.

Increases in average telephone bills for local service this year occurred in practically all States with only the Pacific States showing declines and with the Middle Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) holding steady. The South Central and Mountain States showed the greatest increase. As of July 1954, the highest rates for local telephone service were paid by farmers in the New England States while by far the lowest charges were paid by farmers in the West North Central region.

Average Monthly Local Farm Telephone Bills, by Regions, July, 1947-54 ^{1/}

Regions	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
	Dollars							
New England	2.85	3.10	3.55	3.70	3.53	3.91	4.11	4.23
Middle Atlantic	2.58	2.83	2.86	3.06	3.24	3.32	3.39	3.39
E. N. Central	2.02	2.26	2.39	2.59	2.81	2.97	3.23	3.32
W. N. Central	1.62	1.82	2.00	2.19	2.41	2.59	2.71	2.75
S. Atlantic	2.26	2.58	2.91	3.08	3.22	3.48	3.61	3.75
E. S. Central	2.14	2.58	2.78	2.98	3.08	3.18	3.23	3.42
W. S. Central	1.50	2.24	2.31	2.32	2.63	2.95	3.25	3.46
Mountain	2.60	2.60	2.75	2.95	3.02	3.43	3.55	3.74
Pacific	2.82	3.17	3.26	3.52	3.64	3.82	4.00	3.93
United States	2.05	2.33	2.49	2.67	2.87	3.06	3.24	3.33

^{1/}The survey made in July and August requested data based on "last bill". This was generally a bill for a period ending in late June, July, or early August.

On July 1, 1954, the percentage of farms with telephones, at 44.3 was the highest on record. This compares with 42.5 percent a year earlier and was two-thirds higher than in 1940. However, in the 20 years prior to 1940 the percentage of farms with telephones declined rather sharply. According to the

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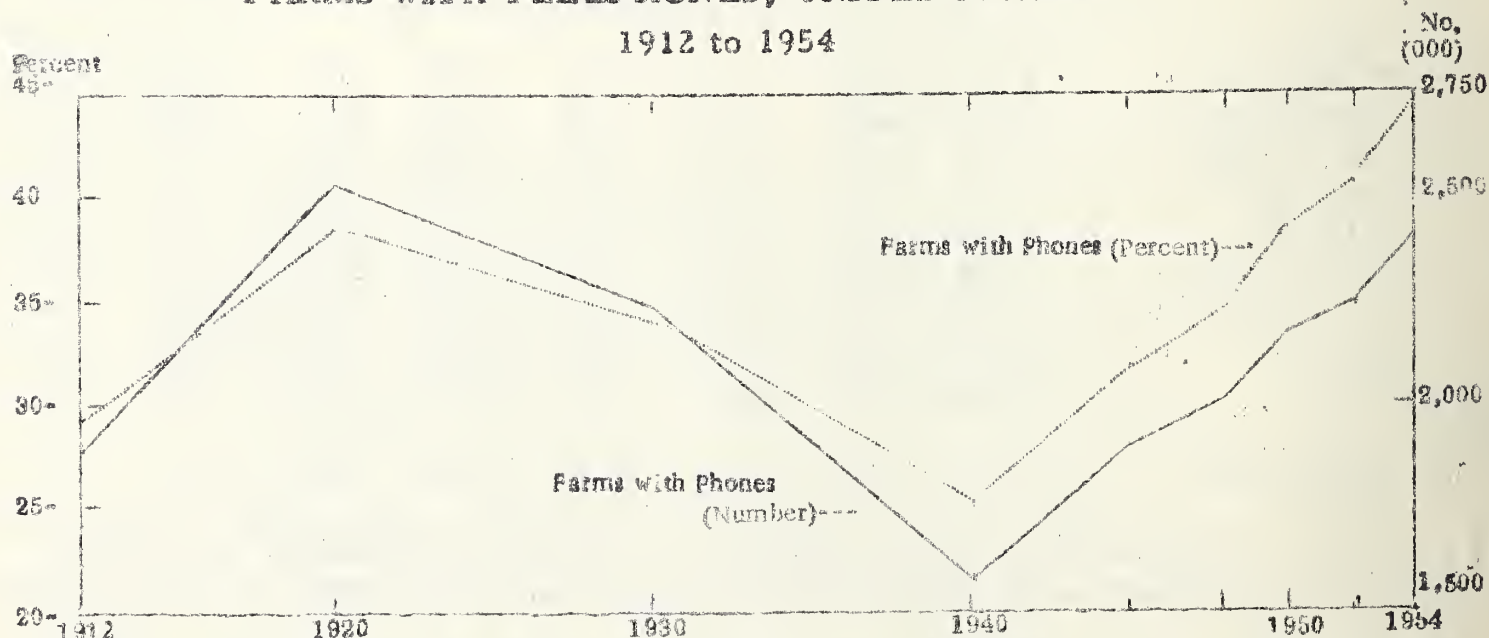
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



U. S. Census, in 1920 about 38 percent of the American farms had telephone service. Although the percentage of farms with telephones is at a record high, the total number of farms with telephones, although having increased rather steadily over the past several years, is still below the 1920 figure.

FARMS WITH TELEPHONES, UNITED STATES

1912 to 1954



According to the survey about 4 percent of all farm telephones on July 1 were on a private line, 20 percent on 2 to 4 party lines, 43 percent on 5 to 8 party lines and 33 percent on lines with nine or more parties. This distribution showed a slight increase for both the 2-4 party lines, and 4-8 party lines, and a corresponding decline for the 9 and over party lines compared to July 1, 1953. By type of service, about 35 percent of the farm telephones were crank type, one-fifth were the lift type, and 45 percent were dial phones.

